



Afternoon Alert - Monday, May 22, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks led with reports that North Korea announced through its state media this morning that it successfully test-launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile called "North Star 2" on Sunday. North Korean leader Kim reportedly said the test launch was "perfect."

INTERNATIONAL

Kishida stresses need for effective measures against North Korea

Foreign Minister Kishida said on NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" on Sunday that Japan must seek more effective measures against North Korea, including additional UNSC sanctions and stronger unilateral sanctions, if North Korea continues its provocations. Kishida said Japan will "ensure international cooperation through diplomacy," "always enhance its missile defense system and be as prepared as possible," and ensure "the deterrence and response capabilities of the U.S.-Japan alliance, enhance the security legislation, and confirm close cooperation" to maintain the system to protect the lives of the Japanese people. He also said: "On the UN Security Council resolutions, it is true that some question whether they are sufficient. As the government, we must continue to seek more effective measures."

UNSC to hold emergency meeting on May 23

TBS reported at noon that following the latest ballistic missile launch by the DPRK, the UN Security Council is arranging an emergency meeting for May 23 at the request of Japan, the U.S., and South

Korea. Noting that a similar meeting was held on May 16, after which the Security Council issued a press statement saying it will closely monitor North Korea and take further serious steps, including sanctions, the network speculated that the Security Council will strongly urge China to increase pressure on North Korea, which continues to ignore U.S. warnings.

DPRK surprises international community with “evening salvo”

TV-Asahi’s noontime infotainment show took up North Korea’s launch of a ballistic missile on late Sunday afternoon, delving into the reason why the Kim regime this time around broke from the pattern of firing missiles early in the morning. Panelists speculated that North Korea conducted the test at an “odd” hour so as to demonstrate that it can launch a surprise attack at anytime from anywhere. The program also focused on the reaction to the latest provocation from Secretary of State Tillerson, who called the testing “disappointing” in an interview on Fox News. The discussants suspected that the top U.S. diplomat was disappointed perhaps because he may have expected that North Korea would heed his advice allegedly made to South Korea’s newly appointed special envoy Hong Seok-hyun last week that North Korea should “trust the U.S.” on its promise to take no hostile action against the DPRK regime. One panelist argued that Sunday’s launch was a stark reminder to the Trump administration that the Kim regime will never come to the negotiating table under the conditions set forth by Washington. He said that Pyongyang will probably agree to hold dialogue with Washington only after it successfully develops and deploys ICBMs equipped with nuclear warheads. Another panelist said the Trump administration’s North Korea policy of seeking dialogue through enhancing military pressure and economic sanctions and having China step up pressure has already hit a snag in the face of the DPRK strongman’s resolve to pursue nuclear and missile programs at all costs.

North Korea crisis

Saturday’s “NHK Special” reported on North Korea, focusing on its ongoing development of an ICBM that can reach the U.S. mainland and a nuclear warhead that can be mounted on a missile, and why the international community failed to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programs. The program interviewed several experts, including former assistant secretary of defense Gregson, former assistant secretary of state Russel, and former defense secretary William Perry. Gregson said although nobody thinks the DPRK has a nuclear missile capability today, it is important to be prepared for the possibility and take appropriate actions. Russel said although the Obama administration tried hard to hold negotiations with the North, the country always refused to sit down at the negotiating table. Perry stressed the need to diplomatically resolve the North Korea issue, as launching a military attack on the North would be disastrous. He also said having North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons at once is no longer an option, but rather must be regarded as a long-term goal. He added that people in North Korea are smart enough to know that their nation would be destroyed if the North attacks Seoul, Tokyo, or the U.S., and stressed the importance of resuming dialogue.

WSJ editor predicts weaker U.S.-Japan alliance if DPRK has nukes

Asahi published an interview with Wall Street Journal Editor in Chief Gerald Baker, who projected that the U.S.-Japan alliance may weaken if North Korea comes to possess nuclear-armed ICBMs. The journalist said: "If there is a possibility that San Francisco would be annihilated, there is no chance the U.S. would defend Japan or South Korea. Japan and South Korea would be vulnerable." He said the possibility of a U.S. preemptive strike against North Korea has risen over the past six months. Baker spoke on U.S.-Japan relations by saying: "They are in good shape right now. However, they could become strained, as a settlement of the DPRK issue would rekindle the issue of the [U.S.] trade deficit [with Japan]."

Six Japanese nationals held in custody in China

TBS reported at noon that six Japanese men have been taken into custody by Chinese authorities since the end of March this year. According to the network, three of them were detained in Shandong, and the other three were detained in Hainan. The network said the majority of the six work for a Japanese company that conducts underground exploration, and that the men were detained because they "carried out actions detrimental to national security." The network speculated that the men are being held in connection with the fact that there are Chinese naval ports in Shandong and Hainan.

- **Chinese ambassador urges Japanese involvement in 'One Belt, One Road' project** (The Mainichi)
- **ROK special envoy says "Japan understands" ROK's position on comfort women issue** (Nikkei)
- **Editorial: Trump's firing of FBI director leads to worsening 'Russia-gate' scandal** (Yomiuri)
- **Cartoon: Russiagate** (Asahi)
- **Kishida defends skipping U.N. talks, saying nuclear weapons ban would widen rift between haves and have-nots** (The Japan Times)
- **Japan, Argentina agree in principle on investment pact** (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

Concern that parachute drops will become routine at Kadena

Sunday's Okinawa Times highlighted growing concern among local officials and residents that parachute drop training at Kadena AB may become routine, noting that the U.S. military conducted the two drills at the installation in April and this month despite strong protests. The daily said although the use of Kadena for such practice is regarded as an "exception" in the 1996 SACO final

agreement, the U.S. military has occasionally conducted the training there by citing foul weather at Iejima Auxiliary Airfield, the primary location for parachute drops according to the bilateral accord. Although the prefectural government insists that all parachute training be performed on Iejima in line with the SACO agreement, the GOJ dismisses such a call by saying that parachute drops over designated waters are permitted. It added that some prefectural officials are looking to conduct a review of the SACO accord so as to curb the U.S. military's parachute training at Kadena and elsewhere.

Two service members killed in traffic accident in Okinawa

Saturday morning's Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that a U.S. airman and a sailor were killed in a traffic accident in Chatan on Thursday night after their motorbike collided with a vehicle driven by a female U.S. service member assigned to Kadena AB. Because only U.S. personnel were involved, the primary investigation into the cause of the fatal mishap is being conducted by the U.S. military based on the SOFA. The local police plan to launch their own probe in collaboration with the U.S. military.

- [Remarks by PM Abe, CCS Suga on DPRK missile launch](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Yamaguchi Pref. to hold missile evacuation drill on June 4](#) (Nikkei)
- [Kansai gropes for missile response as Korean war hype builds BY ERIC JOHNSTON](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan suffered minor damage from "WannaCry" ransomware](#) (Nikkei)
- [Popular book on Okinawa bases set for unprecedented fourth printing](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Okinawa Minister Tsuruho visits prefecture](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [Gov't presents safety measures on Osprey to Saga Governor](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)

POLITICS

Suga dismisses UN letter on conspiracy legislation

NHK reported at noon that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga rebuffed a letter sent to Prime Minister Abe by UN Special Rapporteur on Privacy Joseph Cannataci, who reportedly expressed strong concern about Japan's anti-conspiracy legislation on the grounds that it could restrict privacy and free speech. The government spokesman said: "The letter does not reflect the position of the United Nations. We've filed a strong protest because it was issued unilaterally as an open letter and the GOJ was not given an opportunity to provide its own explanation." He stressed that the content was "clearly inappropriate." According to the network, the UN official was "concerned by the risks of arbitrary

application of this legislation given the vague definition of what would constitute the 'planning' and the 'preparatory actions' and given the inclusion of a broad range of crimes ... which are apparently unrelated to terrorism and organized crime."

- [Prime minister's schedule on May 21](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on May 20](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on May 19](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gov't considers designating Fukushima, quake-hit regions as special economic zones](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan may lift insurance premiums to curb child care costs](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Anti-conspiracy voting highlights Ishin's tilt toward ruling parties](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: We oppose passage of 'anti-conspiracy' bill in current form](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Anti-conspiracy bill a travesty of justice in light of public opinion](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Cartoon: Big Brother is watching](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: LDP factions must make efforts to produce competent parliamentarians](#) (The Japan News)

OPINION POLLS

Support for Abe cabinet drops to 46.4%

TV Asahi reported at noon on the results of its opinion poll conducted over the weekend, which showed that public approval for the Abe cabinet dropped 4 points from last month to 46.4%. Nonsupport was 32.4%. On PM Abe's intention to revise the Constitution by 2020, 35% expressed support, while 43% expressed disapproval. On the so-called conspiracy bill, 65% said they do not understand the content, while 31% said they do. 32% expressed support for the bill, while 36% did not. 32% were undecided.

- [Cabinet support drops to 46%, Mainichi poll](#) (Mainichi)
- [Opinion poll & results from Mainichi Shimbun](#) (Mainichi)

- [77% say gov't explanation of crime of conspiracy "insufficient," Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [Japan automakers spending record \\$25bn on R&D](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Keidanren sends delegation to U.S. Midwest](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Annual no. of foreign visitors to Japan tops 10 mil. at fastest pace](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't affiliated bank to finance space business](#) (Nikkei)
- [MHLW to help Japanese medical companies make inroads into emerging nations](#) (Nikkei)
- [SoftBank kicks off \\$93bn investment fund](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Employment for university graduates hits record-high 97.6% amid labor shortage](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

Developmental disorders

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported on developmental disorders, saying that one in 15 primary and middle school children is said to have some kind of developmental disorder, including autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and learning disorder (LD). The program said that according to the latest research, many of those who have developmental disorders are hypersensitive to light and/or sound, which makes it difficult for them to communicate and adapt socially. The program reported on efforts around the world to accommodate people with developmental disorders, such as efforts in the UK to dim lights and turn down the volume of sounds in stores so that people with developmental disorders can also shop. The program also introduced Microsoft and other companies that hire people with developmental disorders for their unique ideas and unique abilities, such as attention to detail and numbers.

- [More lay judge candidates deterred by length of trials](#) (The Japan News)
- [Large regional disparities in marriage rates point to range of local factors](#) (The Japan Times)
- [The miserable case of unhappiness surging in Japan](#) (The Japan Times)

